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ABSTRACT

Julius Streicher, the German publisher sentenced to death in the Nuremberg trials for rhetorical crimes against humanity, published the widely-read and virulently anti-semitic weekly tabloid "Der Stuermer" from 1923 to 1945. Through Streicher's rhetoric and through the publication's cartoons, Jews were depicted as bacilli, vampires, rats, and other loathsome, inhuman creatures. When presented in human form, Jews were depicted as extremely inferior and deformed examples of humanity, lacking the nobler attributes of humankind and possessed of mysterious powers stemming from their demonic, supremely evil natures. To support his argument that Jews were involved in a sinister conspiracy against society, Streicher presented thousands of cases of alleged Jewish crimes and devoted a tremendous amount of space to alleged Jewish attempts to destroy Gentile society through sexual corruption and murder. To counteract the belief that there were some decent Jews, Streicher presented "evidence" that each and every Jew was depraved and dangerous. Streicher's rhetoric reflected the three cardinal principles of Nazi propaganda--simplicity, repetition, and emotional appeal--and showed his sound grasp of persuasive techniques. His rhetoric, along with other Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, isolated and distanced Jews from other Germans, gradually establishing the moral climate that sanctioned the Holocaust. (GT)

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JULIUS STREICHER AND THE RHETORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

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JULIUS STREICHER AND THE RHETORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

The Nuremberg trial of the major war criminals sentenced the infamous anti-Semitic publisher Julius Streicher to the gallows for rhetorical crimes against humanity.[1] He was charged not with torture, murder, or genocide against the Jews he so genuinely hated, but with poisoning the minds of his fellow "Aryan" Germans. A dark irony indeed. But it does remind us that there were two victims in the Holocaust. The utterly innocent Jews and the millions of blinded dehumanized Europeans who came to believe that "the Jews" simply did not matter. While many forces conspired to numb the German perception of Jews, not the least of these were the virulent anti-Semitic publications of Streicher's Stuermer Press. The principle product of that enterprise was the tabloid Der Stuermer, a weekly devoted entirely to anti-Semitic articles. Published from 1923 to 1945, during a time when "weeklies" were much more common than today, the Stuermer regularly reached hundreds of thousands of German households, and published numerous special editions having circulations as high as 2,000,000. Immodestly but perhaps accurately, Streicher proclaimed his Stuermer to be "the most widely read paper in Germany."[2]

Here we offer a critical analysis of Streicher's anti-Semitic rhetoric, giving special attention to the image of "the Jew" which his publications and speeches propagated. Second, we will examine the threat potential which this image possessed.[3]

The Image of the Jew

Throughout his career, Streicher's goals were simple, and his rhetoric

crude but effective. Briefly stated, Streicher wished to persuade Germans that Jews were unpleasant and dangerous, and that they should be removed from the society of non-Jews by whatever means were necessary. This required the creation of a thoroughly unsavory image of Jews.

Traditional anti-Semitism saw Jews as people affirming the wrong religion.[4] Simple conversion remade a Jew into an acceptable person. Although Streicher used religious arguments, his anti-Semitism was the more modern racial anti-Semitism which maintains that the problem with a Jew is that he is genetically Jewish, an inherent and permanent defect that can in no way be remedied, even by so potent a symbol as baptism. Streicher's first rhetorical goal, then was to convince his audience that Jews were "foul stuff," biologically defective, subhuman in physique and character, superhuman only in depravity.

He regularly presented Jews as loathsome, inhuman creatures. Streicher's coarse though gifted cartoonist, Phillip Rupprecht, who used the pen name FIPS, drew hundreds of cartoons depicting Jews in the form of bacilli, parasites, spiders, poisonous mushrooms, vampires, toads, rats, vultures, centipedes, and monsters. A children's story book published by the Stuermer publishing house provided comparisons between Jews and coo-coos, chameleons, locusts, bedbugs, mongrel dogs, poisonous snakes, tapeworms, and bacteria.[5] These images certainly helped to persuade readers that Jews were inferior creatures, especially since similar rhetoric came from all major communication channels of the Third Reich.

Language which makes human beings into vermin has an additional consequence. Alex Bein observes that the annihilation of Jews by poison gas was the logical result of "their final identification with parasites, cankers, bacilli, and vermin. Once the Jews were really so regarded, it was not only imperative to

exterminate them, it was also quite obvious that in the process the same means we use against bacilli and vermin was to be employed: poison gas."[6] It is far easier to kill human beings if one adopts the rhetorical convention that they are not realy human. Vietnamese become Gooks, Japanese Nips, Germans Krauts, Americans Gringos, in a rhetoric which dehumanizes its victims. And the less humanoid the comparison, the easier it becomes to kill.

When Streicher did present Jews in recognizably human form, it was as most inferior examples of humanity. According to his racial theory, there were a variety of pure races, including the Aryan, the Oriental, and the Negro. The Negroes and Orientals were inferior races, but did have their proper place on the earthly sphere, the right to dwell in their own land. Jews, however, were the bastard offspring of the pure races, manifesting all of the bad and none of the good of their parent races. "Racial science has incontrovertibly proven," Streicher thought, "that the bastard, the halfbreed, receives only the bad characteristics of the races from which he stems, not the good spiritual or physical characteristics. Therefore, the Jew possesses the lust of the Negro, the craftiness of the Mongol, and the criminal drives of all the races which have combined to produce his blood."[7]

To emphasize the racial differences between human beings, Streicher often drew on agricultural or natural examples. Just as a purebred horse was of greater worth than a beast of dubious ancestry, so too a human of pure blood was better than one of several. A 1934 cartoon made the point by showing two ugly Jews discussing dog breeding with the German owner of two splendid animals. One Jew is arguing that one has to know the pedigree of a dog, but that all

men on the other hand are exactly the same.[8] The ironic contrast of this statement against the image of the well bred dogs, the handsome German and the ugly Jews led the audience to the desired conclusion.

Jews always appeared in the Stuermer in most unpleasant ways. FIPS's Jews were fat, slouching, unshaven, crooked nosed, protruding lipped, filthy examples of humanity. Streicher further printed hundreds of unflattering photographs of Jews, often as filler items tucked on the inside or back pages. These commonly depicted Jews with distorted expressions or physical deformities, sometimes in contrast to a particularly attractive German or an intelligent looking ape. Multitudes of articles made the same point.

Stuermer Jews were not only ugly, they further lacked the nobler attributes of mankind. For example, they were cowardly. Streicher claimed that all Jews lived by the principle that one ought to be the last to join the army so that one might be the first to return home. Jews were lazy. Streicher thought they avoided healthy physical occupations, instead monopolizing professions such as law and medicine. They were, to return to an earlier theme, parasitic, incapable of supporting themselves by productive labor. If Jews were all removed to an island like Madagascar, they would perish since none would be able to perform common labor.[9] In the work-ethic German culture, this was an effective theme, especially since Jews were represented in business and the profession out of proportion to their numbers in the general population. Jews were also greedy, cruel, unforgiving, dishonest, the very exemplars of vice.

Since race mixture was "unnatural," Streicher argued that it was to be expected that Jews would not be capable of normal human behavior. Jews could not laugh in the ordinary manner, for example. The Stuermer asserted that

there were two kinds of laughter, the regular human variety, and the unnatural Jewish variety.[10] A later issue carried a full page of photographs depicting Jews in distorted mirth, titled "When Jews Laugh."[11] Streicher further referred to such creatures as a Judenarzt, Judenanwalt, or Judentenor, literally Jew doctor, Jew lawyer, or Jew tenor, as if somehow a Jewish tenor was quite a different sounding singer than his German colleague.

Our examples so far have presented Jews as inhuman or subhuman. Yet the Jews also seemed to have mysterious powers, stemming from their demonic, supremely evil natures. "The Jew has the Devil in his blood," the Stuermer argued in 1935.[12] When the airship Hindenburg exploded in 1937, the Stuermer detected the outline of a Jew in a photograph of the disaster. "Nature here has shown clearly and with absolute correctness the Devil in human form," it observed.[13] A 1939 FIPS cartoon titled "The Satanic Serpent Judah" made the same point, building of course on the ancient unpopularity of snakes and their almost equally ancient connection with Jews.[14]

The Devilish nature of Jews was evident in a variety of ways. They were for example filthy in both the physical and moral sense. Streicher regularly reported on dirty Jews, a point reinforced by nearly every FIPS cartoon. When the last Jews left the town of Roth in 1936, a Stuermer reporter related the alarming discoveries at the now empty synagogue. "The dirt on the floors and windowsills was half an inch deep. Papers, bottles, boxes, bedsteads, rags and rubbish covered the floor. A foul odor came from the furniture. Just a few weeks before, the Jews held their 'worship services' in these rooms."[15] A Stuermer reporter who inspected an abandoned Jewish apartment in Vienna found "clouds of dust." Conditions were "beyond words. Even in a pigsty one does not find such disorder." When the former Jewish inhabitants

had gone out about their business, they had cleaned themselves up, but their true nature was demonstrated by the conditions under which they lived when out of public view.[16] Numerous other articles were printed on the same theme.

The image of the Jews, then, portrayed them as inferior to humanity in ordinary virtues unpleasant, unclean creatures. More than that, Jews were dangerous, a deadly threat to every German.

The Dangerous Jew

It follows that if one is physically defective and filthy, one is also morally soiled. The strong and healthy have ever been inclined to do good as the list of the heroes of Western Civilization makes plain. The virtue of cleanliness also is rooted in our traditions. The ritual cleanliness of the Old Testament and the later Christian emphasis on being "washed clean" are two of many examples. Since cleanliness is good, filthiness is evil. Pornography is described as "filthy," a shady action is a "dirty" trick. It was to be expected, in short, that a deformed, dirty Jew would be evil. And evil is dangerous.

The jump here is important. Individuals may be physically dirty without endangering the entire community. Moral depravity, to the contrary, can threaten the whole society. And that is the argument which Streicher wanted to make: Jews were dangerous. His motto, Die Juden sind unser Ünglück (The Jews are our misfortune), graced the front cover of nearly every issue of the Stuermer. It suggested that Jews were responsible for Germany's difficulties, that they were engaged in a gigantic international conspiracy with outposts where ever a single Jew lived, aimed at the enslavement and

destruction of those who were not Jews.

To motivate an audience to hate Jews (or any other group), it is essential to demonstrate an immediate threat. For rhetorical purposes, the most significant sphere of the Jewish conspiracy was in the villages and cities of Germany. The nefarious activities of Jews in London or Washington were distant from the audience, hard to visualize. But once one is convinced the local Jew, the one visible daily, is evil, it becomes easier to accept the argument that other, unseen, Jews are also engaging in threatening behavior. Streicher therefore provided a deluge of accounts of Jewish criminal deeds in Nuremberg and throughout Germany. In 1932, for example, Streicher told of a hardworking but foolish German farmer who committed suicide after being ruined by dealing with dishonest Jews. His wife and children were left penniless.[17]

Jewish merchants were equally criminal. Not only were their goods overpriced and shoddy, they often were impure and dangerous. A 1931 article told of a Jewish baker's daughter who urinated in the bread trough. "The girl's actions should surprise no one," the article stated. "Jews by themselves are unclean and swinish. . . . To non-Jews, however, they are two or three times as bad."[18] A 1935 FIPS cartoon depicted a Jew grinding a rat to make sausage,[19] and one of Streicher's children's books displayed, in revolting color, the interior of a filthy Jewish butcher shop. There, a bloody aproned butcher, shoes firmly planted on a steak, cigar ashes falling on other cuts, smiles at an unsuspecting customer while in the background a grimy cat prowls atop other cuts of meat.[20] Such images were surely persuasive. The audience need only suspect they were true to resolve that it would be best to avoid their local Jewish tradesmen.

Other representative Stuermer stories had Jews adulterating Bavarian beer, persuading Nuremberg children to stay up late and get into mischief,

stealing the life savings of old women, beating German servant girls, and violating German foreign exchange regulations. The sheer number of such tales helped make persuasive the argument that Jews were criminal by nature. Surely, a loyal Stuermer reader would think, all of these stories could not be untrue! And such stories once printed were almost impossible to refute. Whether true or false one would expect the accused to deny the charges.

These accusations contributed to the larger indictment--that Jews were engaged in a worldwide conspiracy which was perilously near success. As Streicher saw it, "the greatest desire of the Jews is to rule the world. From the beginning their primary aim has been to destroy non-Jewish states and to gain control of them through a world revolution."[21] Hundreds of articles argued that Jews controlled London and Washington, Paris and Moscow, indeed all major nations, from behind the scenes. The argument was that Jews were dangerous not at the local level only, for their deadly conspiracy endangered everyone who was not Jewish.

Rather than examine the entire conspiracy argument, we shall examine two illustrative parts of it: the Jewish attempt to destroy Gentile society through sexual corruption and murder. Of the two, sexual corruption got the greater attention, partly because Streicher himself had an unusually strong interest in the subject.[22]

Part of Streicher's concern with sex stemmed from his peculiar racial theories. He thought:

> "Alien albumin" is the semen of a man of another race. As a result of intercourse, the male semen is partially or totally absorbed by the female body. A single incident of intercourse between a Jew and a German woman is sufficient to poison her blood. She has taken in the alien soul

along with the "aliem albumin." Even if she marries an Aryan man, she can no longer bear pure Aryan children, but only bastards, in whose breasts dwell two souls, and who physically look like they are members of a mixed race. . . .

Now we know why the Jew uses every method of seduction he knows to seduce German girls as early as possible, why the Jewish doctor rapes his female patients while they are drugged, and why Jewish wives permit their husbands to have intercourse with non-Jewish women. The German girl, the German woman, who absorbs the alien semen of a Jew can never again bear German children.[23]

Jews, then, had quite unusual motivations for sexual crimes. Not only were they satiating their animal lusts, they were contributing to the destruction of the German race. A 1935 Stuermer report of a Jewish doctor who allegedly raped a female patient, for example, noted: "His goal was attained. He had destroyed a racially valuable woman, forever poisoning her with his Jewish blood."[24] When enough German women had been ruined, the German nation would lose its racial purity and the Jews would be able to work their will.

Here also it was necessary to present local cases of Jewish sexual misconduct, a task in which Streicher took revealing pleasure. The pages of the Stuermer from 1923 to 1945 are filled with accounts of Jewish sexual behavior, often in considerable detail. Jews seduced their victims with drugs, alcohol, and money, though in one unusual case the agent was "pastries and strong coffee."[25] Sometimes they resorted to hypnotism or force. Whatever the method, Streicher presented alleged cases from every corner of Germany. In 1932 a Stuermer writer estimated that hundreds of thousands of German women had been ruined by Jews.[26] The following year another writer concluded that tens of thousands

had been defiled in Düsseldorf alone.[27] The Jews Hirschland and Voss were accused of defiling over 200 women during a fifteen year span. Some of their crimes were described in complete detail.[28] One Obermayer allegedly committed 800 offenses against young boys.[29] In short, as the Stuermer wrote after one case in 1936, "The same crime repeatedly happens everywhere in Germany. It is the same in Berlin or Hamburg, in Munich or Leipzig, in large cities or small, in market towns, villages and hamlets. The Jew is at work, destroying and ruining German girls, German women, and German families."[30]

Radical movements customarily employ sexual accusations in their rhetoric. As Richard Hofstadter notes, it may be a matter of projection, attributing one's own baser drives to the enemy.[31] Certainly sexual rhetoric is often successful rhetoric. The very nature of the subject attracts attention, being slightly illicit. In reading accounts of Jewish crimes the reader was titilating his own interests while yet performing a laudable act--keeping abreast with the Jewish campaign to destroy German womanhood. Such rhetoric surely had explanatory value for sexually insecure German males as well. Lack of success with women could be attributed not to personal failings, rather to the sinister power of the Jews which led otherwise willing German women to strange bedrooms.

And the crime was secret. Only the knowing could detect the signs of a woman ruined by Jews. Yet it was happening everywhere, each discovered case allegedly outweighed by multitudes of undiscovered instances. The worst part of a conspiracy is the hidden part, the enormous evil of which can only be imagined. These unseen horrors, however, need the rhetorical support of concrete instances which lend credence (if not proof) to the larger argument. The number of instances Streicher provided was sufficient to suggest that racial crimes were indeed occuring often, that at any moment each German man

and woman might be threatened. The concepts involved were among the most sensitive available: blood, healthy offspring, sexual filth, sinister conspiracies. Though Streicher's biology was nonsense, his rhetoric was strong.

The Jews were about even more direct ways of destroying the German race. Streicher argued that Jews were slaughtering large numbers of Germans. To help support the charge, he devoted substantial space to stories and photographs depicting the alleged horrors of Jewish slaughterhouses. Even his children's books stressed the matter. Jews supposedly slaughtered animals in revoltingly cruel ways.

Just as physical filth led to moral filth, so Jewish sadism toward animals led to sadism toward non-Jews, especially since Streicher thought the Jews viewed Gentiles as no better than animals. Thus, Streicher revived legends of ritual murder, tales that Jews require the blood of Christians for their religious rituals. A variety of cases, dating back to the Middle Ages, was discussed at great length. In 1938, the Stuermer spoke of "the countless ritual murders of the Jews,"[32] and the 1939 "Ritual Murder Special Edition" claimed hundreds of thousands of ceremonial murders had occured. If so, the Jews were remarkably adept at concealing their crimes, for the 1934 "Ritual Murder Special Edition" was able to list only 131 alleged cases dating back to ancient history.[33]

But the very absurdity of the ritual murder charge had persuasive force. Hitler observed that large lies are more likely to be believed than small lies, provided there is at least some plausibility to the lie. Since the entire public opinion apparatus of the Third Reich reinforced the idea that Jews were depraved, it was reasonable for the average German to fear the worst. Indeed,

such rhetoric is typical of conspiratorial thought. Most conspiracies have both rational and irrational elements. Hofstadter found paranoid rhetoric to be characterized by a peculiar leap in thought, laid on an exhaustive foundation of evidence.[34] The average German could observe, if he wished, that large numbers of Jews seemed to be committing criminal acts. He could examine ancient woodcuts of alleged ritual murders in the pages of the Stuermer, and observe that Jewish slaughterhouses existed. It was not hard to accept the peculiar leap that Jews were indeed engaged in a sinister worldwide conspiracy which, among other horrors, required the slaughter of innocent Christians.

In brief, then, Streicher presented Jews as foreign, alien beings, inferior to Germans in man's nobler abilities, yet possessed with evil to a devilish degree. He presented thousands of cases of alleged Jewish crimes throughout Germany and the world which were the foundation of the argument that all Jews were part of that sinister and evil conspiracy.

The Universal Jew

The last statement requires amplification. It was not sufficient to Streicher's ends if Germans came to agree that most Jews were evil. One could accept that premise and yet maintain that one's Jewish friends were the exceptions, a variant of the "some of my best friends" argument. Since most Jews had at least some non-Jewish friends or associates, such a response would be fatal to attempts to solve the "Jewish problem" by treating all Jews in the same manner--harshly. If Jews are in general a bad lot, one obviously keeps closer watch on them than on other men, but if some are decent only those apprehended in criminal activity should be punished. Yet Streicher thought

of "the Jewish question" as one requiring a total solution, which in his mind alternated between deportation and annihilation. How was this to be accomplished if millions of Germans knew "decent Jews?"

In response, Streicher was forced to argue that there were no decent Jews, that each and every Jew was depraved and dangerous. Early in his career he had argued that to say there were decent Jews admitted that most were bad,[35] but he rapidly realized that he could not grant the possibility of a single good Jew. In 1935, for example, the Stuermer wrote: "It is hard to believe that there are still Germans, among them even some so-called National Socialists, who say that there are also decent Jews."[36]

To persuade those who thought they knew good Jews of their error, Streicher first preferred the use of the singular term the Jew (Die Jude) to the Jews (Die Juden), even when speaking of the entire Jewish race. The term made all Jews into one enormous, corrupt body, the individual Jew being part of the larger entity, so much like his racial brethren that it was not worth the trouble to distinguish him as a person. Jews, such a term suggests, work together. Each Jew is involved in the crime of every other. The individual is guilty of the crimes of the race, and the crimes of the individual in turn are the responsibility of the entire race.

Streicher also presented stories of Jews whom neighbors had thought to be decent, but who had been caught in serious crimes. In 1935 Streicher reported on a Dr. Leo Mayer who was thought by nearly everyone to be a decent Jew until he drugged and raped a female patient.[37] Earlier the Stuermer had written about the "respected" and "decent" Jews Karl and Willi Kraus, pillars of their community, who as it turned out were engaged in a major agricultural scandal.[38]

A Stuermer children's book included a story in which a mother told her son that Jews are like toadstools. Some looked like innocent mushrooms, but each was nonetheless deadly. So also Jews sometimes looked like normal human beings, but each was a criminal.[39]

The stereotype Streicher was building, then, was an all-encompassing one. In attempting to persuade Germans that all Jews were evil, he was destroying the bands of friendship and respect that hold society together, the ties that keep men civilized. The death of a pet dog causes more pain that the destruction of a hundred thousand people in an earthquake on a distant continent. The dog is known, people five thousand miles away are not. In breaking relationships between Jews and Germans, Streicher was isolating and distancing Jews from their fellow human beings, laying the foundations of the indifference, the lack of concern, which tolerated genocide.

Rhetorical Style

We have seen enough of Streicher's style to grasp its central characteristics. Streicher obviously was familiar with the three cardinal principles of Nazi propaganda--simplicity, repetition, and emotional appeal. As to simplicity, he aimed at an audience with limited education. He used simple German with uncommonly short sentences. In discussing the intricacies of biology or international finance, he used language that could be understood by any of his readers. That way, even college professors might be able to understand him, he said. Repetition is equally evident. Sometimes a single issue of the Stuermer carried a half dozen articles on the same theme. The major themes recurred so often that a reader need only study a few issues before he encountered nearly all the weapons in Streicher's anti-Semitic arsenal. New evidence was continually

supplied to support the same fundamental points, so the new reader rapidly erected his anti-Semitic world view. Of course, as we have seen, the primary appeal Streicher used was to the emotions, to fear and hatred, to suspicion and mistrust. His standards of evidence and logic were minimal.

Too, Streicher had a sound grasp of the techniques of persuasion. He realized that there were different levels of commitment on the part of his audience. Some passionately hated Jews, others were only slightly prejudiced. He adopted methods which reached these varying levels of anti-Semitism. For wavering anti-Semites, he resorted to simple intimidation, publishing for example the names of Germans who patronized Jewish shops or professionals.[40] To help the nominal anti-Semite, he provided lists of Jewish operations to be avoided.[41] For the dedicated anti-Semite, Streicher provided many opportunities. He could compile lists of Jews in his area, maintain a Stuermer display case in his neighborhood, inform on his neighbors, or provide various types of anti-Semitic materials to the Stuermer. A large part of the paper's material came from such loyal readers. In short, he took account of the beliefs of his audience, and provided alternatives each reader could perform without demanding too much, a kind of public commitment which can be most powerful.[42] His grasp of other common persuasive means was the result of many years of practical experience in mass propaganda and journalism.

Conclusions

What were the ultimate results of Streicher's rhetoric? He did not, his claims to the contrary, raise an army of millions of dedicated anti-Semites, though his converts were many. But he was widely read and heard. The direct

misery his work caused many Jews was enormous. More than that, however, Streicher and the other Nazi anti-Semites combined the impoverished ideas of anti-Semitism with the techniques of mass propaganda to establish the moral climate which sanctioned the Holocaust.

Nazism was not an ideology that made concrete plans before such plans were necessary. Karl Schleunes observes: "The Final Solution as it emerged in 1941 and 1942 was not the product of a grand design. In fact, when the Nazis came to power they had no specific plans for a solution of any sort."[43] Streicher himself certainly had no clear idea in 1933 about what to do with the Jews. His suggestions most commonly came to be deportation to an island like Madagascar, or annihilation, the latter solution growing more common as the Third Reich advanced.

Surely self persuasion was at work. To argue for twenty years, as Streicher (and Hitler) did, that Jews were the Devil in human form, corrupt, evil, and yet permit them to exist is inconsistent. The more Streicher wrote, the stronger were the forces leading him to call for the destruction of Jewry. And Streicher was not alone. His halting steps toward genocide paralleled the steps other leading Nazis took.

If the leadership of the National Socialist state was not readly for mass slaughter in 1933, even less were the German people. The moral learning of millenia opposed the Holocaust. And it is clear that the Nazis could not ignore the feelings of the German people. When in 1940, for example, the Nazi state began liquidating the mentally and physically unfit, nationwide public opposition forced significant reductions in the program. Had the Holocaust begun in 1933, a similar reaction might well have occurred. But the Nazis moved in steps. Gradually Jewish rights were taken away. Only slowly were they removed

from public life. And unceasingly the voice of Julius Streicher and those like him was heard, declaring that Jews were inferior, Jews were dangerous. In the war years when open genocide began, few indeed spoke on behalf of the Jews. And it was not from total ignorance. The masses of Germany did not know the details of the Holocaust. But they knew something. They knew enough, as J.P. Stern puts it, to know they did not want to know more.[44] The masses of Germany did not come to hate Jews. Rather they became indifferent, their consciences dulled by years of anti-Semitic rhetoric that Jews were somehow different than they, and pernaps ought to be left well enough alone.

It was this for which Julius Streicher was hung at Nuremberg. The rhetoric we have seen funded the arguments of the Prosecution:

> In its extent Streicher's crime is probably greater and more far-reaching than that of any of the other defendants. The misery that they caused finished with their incarceration. The effects of this man's crime, of the poison he has injected into the minds of millions and millions of young boys and girls and young men and women lives on. He leaves behind him a legacy of almost a whole people poisoned with hate, sadism, and murder, and perverted by him.[45]

Persuaded himself to the end, Streicher's final testament and his dying words affirmed his faith in the dreadful doctrines he had for twenty years so successfully proclaimed.[46]

NOTES

[1] Streicher was born in 1885. After a reasonably normal childhood, he became a public school teacher in Nuremberg. World War I, which he served in with distinction, shattered his comfortable world and catalyzed his decision to become an anti-Semitic politician. By 1922 he had a personal following of 5,000 which had accompanied him through several political parties. In October 1922 he secured Hitler's lifelong friendship by merging his following with the then tiny Nazi party. His rhetorical abilities contributed significantly to the rise of Nazism in the last years of the Weimar Republic. When Hitler gained power in 1933, Streicher became a prominent national political figure, remaining so until 1940, when he was forced to leave public life as the result of administrative incompetence, his abraisive personality, and corrupt behavior. He retired to his farm outside Nuremberg from where he directed his publishing endeavors until he was captured in 1945 by a Jewish major from the Bronx. Streicher is the most prominent Nazi leader without a published biography. The best English treatment of his early career is Robin Lenman, "Julius Streicher and the Origins of the NSDAP in Nuremberg, 1918-1923," in German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler, ed. Anthony Nicholls and Eric Matthias (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), pp. 129-159. An account of his downfall is provided by Edward N. Peterson, The Limits of Hitler's Power (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

[2] Cited by Louis W. Bondy, Racketeers of Hatred: Julius Streicher and the Jew-Baiters International (London: Newman Wolsey, 1946), p. 45.

[3] Surprisingly little has been written on Streicher's contribution to Nazi anti-Semitism. Haig Bosmajian's The Language of Oppression (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1974), pp. 11-32 focusses on Hitler's anti-Semitic rhetoric. The only book on his activities is Fred Hahn, Lieber Stuermer: Lesebriefe an das NS-Kampfblatt 1924 bis 1945 (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1978).

[4] Joshua Trachtenberg's The Devil and the Jew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943) is a fascinating account of religious anti-Semitism during the Medieval period.

[5] Ernst Hiemer, Der Pudelmopsdackelpinschern (Nuremberg: Stuermerverlag, 1940). Such imagery was typical of Nazi anti-Semitism. See Bosmajian, pp. 24-26.

[6] "The Jewish Parasite--Notes on the Semantics of the Jewish Problem with Special Reference to Germany," in Year Book IX, Publications of the Leo Baeck Institute (London: East and West Library, 1964), pp. 36-37.

[7] Der Stuermer (Hereafter, DS), #23/1934. We shall draw our examples from Streicher's published work, since it reached a broader audience than his speeches. The themes of his written and spoken rhetoric were, however, identical, as a survey of his one published book of speeches suggests. See his Kampf dem Weltfeind (Nuremberg: Stuermerverlag, 1938).

[8] DS, #22/1934.

[9] DS, #4/1934.

[10] DS, #49/1940.

[11] DS, #11/1941.

[12] DS, #27/1935

[13] DS, #23/1937.

[14] DS, #23/1939.

[15] DS, #5/1936.

[16] DS, #37/1938.

[17] DS, #7/1932.

[18] DS, #11/1931.

[19] DS, #7/1935.

[20] Elwira Bauer, Trau keinem Fuchs auf seiner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid (Nuremberg: Stuermer Verlag, 1936). The story observed that the added filth would increase the weight of the meat.

[21] DS, #28/1938.

[22] Streicher's sexual misconduct was notorious. Around 1930, for example, he was boasting he could never give an effective speech to a mass meeting unless he first had sexual relations with a young woman. See Der Nazi-Spiegel, #2/December 1932, a copy of which is in the Hauptarchiv der NSDAP, Hoover Institution microfilm version, reel 85, folder 1734. At the Nuremberg trial, he proudly claimed to have been a famous fornicator. See

Douglas M. Kelly, 22 Cells in Nuremberg (New York: Greenburg, 1947), p. 143. Actresses who desired leading roles in Nuremberg theatrical productions after 1933 frequently needed to conduct intimate negotiations with Streicher, and so on.

23 Deutsche Volksgesundheit aus Blut und Boden, III (1 January 1935), 3. This was Streicher's anti-Semitic medical journal.

24 DS, #8/1935.

25 DS, Sondernummer 2/1935.

26 DS, #34/1932.

27 DS, #1/1933.

28 DS, Sondernummer 2/1935.

29 DS, #52/1936.

30 DS, #48/1936.

31 The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 31-32.

32 DS, #17/1938.

33 Streicher's dubious standards of evidence are indicated by the source of a story on the uses of Christian blood in Jewish ritual. The grisly account was taken from an Italian translation of a Greek translation of an 1803 Moldavian work by a Jewish convert to Christianity. This "irrefutable"

evidence was used in the ritual murder special editions of 1934 and 1935. The 1934 version, the most notorious product of Streicher's career, was reprinted in English in 1976 by the New Christian Crusade Church, an offshoot of the American Nazi movement.

34 Hofstadter, p. 37.

35 DS, #23 amd #30/1926.

36 DS, #1/1935.

37 Ibid.

38 DS, #14/1929.

39 Ernst Hiemer, Der Giftpilz (Nuremberg: Stuermerverlag, 1938), pp. 3-7.

40 For one of many examples, see DS, #40/1937.

41 DS, #44/1935, for example, provided a list of Jewish dentists (and German dentists with Jewish wives) practicing in Nuremberg.

42 For a more detailed study of Streicher's relationship to his readers, see "Julius Streicher and the Impact of Der Stuermer," Wiener Library Bulletin, XXIX (1976, New Series 39/40), 41-46.

43 The Twisted Road to Auschwitz (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 267.

44 Hitler: The Fuehrer and the People (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 215.

45 The Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military

Tribunal (Nuremberg: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947-49), V, p. 118.

46 Streicher's political testament, only recently recovered, concludes with a reaffirmation of his anti-Semitism. "I would be a cowardly dog if now, in the power of the enemy, I abjured that which has been known to be my conviction for more than 25 years." See "Das politische Testament Julius Streichers," Vierteljahrshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte, XXVI (1978), 693.